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Man shot dead in new wave of attacks on North businessmen

From Niall Kiely

A DERRY businessman was shot dead and a Belfast company director received a leg wound in separate shooting incidents last night. The attacks are believed to be part of a campaign against leading figures in the North's commercial life launched late last year by the Provisional IRA.

The fatal shooting happened at 6.22 when Mr. Peter Hill arrived at his home in Daphne Gardens, in the Waterside area of Derry. Two gunmen were lying in wait and they opened fire on the 45-year-old businessman, who was hit several times.

Mr. Hill was rushed to Altnagelvin Hospital for emergency treatment but died within 30 minutes of the attack. The gunmen escaped and the RUC later appealed to the public to come forward with information on a car which left the area of the killing driving at speed.

Mr. Hill, a married man with a family, was described locally as "genuine and popular" and is known to have had an interest in the arts.

Mr. Peter Hill was a serving major in the Ulster Defence Regiment, the locally-recruited unit in NI of the British Army. His business connections were in the furniture and particularly in the drapery trade.

The second shooting was at the

Antrim Road home of Mr. Leonard Steinberg, a prominent member of the Jewish community in Northern Ireland, who is associated with Stanley's bookmakers chain. Mr. Steinberg went to answer a knock on his front door and as he walked down the hallway five shots were fired through the door.

Mr. Steinberg was wounded in the left thigh but was not seriously hurt. Later last night, his condition in hospital was said to be comfortable.

This is the second Jewish businessman to come under attack since the series of assassination attempts began.

The assassination of Mr. Hill and the attempt to kill Mr. Steinberg follow a brief lull in the campaign against leading business and industrial figures. The attacks began without warning last July, when a series of shootings and bombings was carried out in Belfast on the homes of such figures.

The Provisional IRA quickly admitted responsibility for the attacks and referred to the targets as business elements who formed part of the base of "the British war machine." One of the homes

attacked on that occasion belonged to a Jewish business man, who, like Mr. Steinberg, was active in his religious community as well as in the commercial world.

These incidents were followed some three months ago with the killing of Mr. Joseph Glover, a Derry company director, who was shot dead on the doorstep of his home. Mr. Glover was a member of a prominent Unionist family in the city.

Then on the second day of this month Mr. Jeffrey Agate (58), the head of the Du Pont petrochemical plant in Derry, was killed by gunmen at his home in Taibot Park. Two local men have since been charged with his murder.

Eight days later, 31-year-old Mr. Alastair McManus—a leading businessman with footwear traders—was wounded in the neck when two armed men called to the door of his house in Belfast's exclusive Malone Road area.

Less than two miles away, shots were fired through the front door of Sir William McKinney, CBE, who is associated with the NI Hospitals' Authority and the Belfast Savings Bank. No one was injured.
